

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LUSAKA 01672 101135Z

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----059138 101136Z /17

O 101029Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8374

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

CONFIDENTIAL LUSAKA 1672

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDEV RH UK

SUBJ: RHODESIA: THE NEUTRAL CHAIRMAN

REF: (A) LONDON 7294; (B) STATE 117300

1. WHILE I AGREE WITH LONDON'S COMMENTS PARA 3 REFTEL A,  
BELIEVE THERE ARE OTHER CONSIDERATIONS TO BE TAKEN INTO  
ACCOUNT:

-- THERE IS AN ADVANTAGE TO THE PF AND FRONTLINE'S UNDERSTANDING  
THAT THE BRITISH ARE NOT EAGER TO REASSUME RESPONSIBILITY IN  
RHODESIA (AS DISTINGUISHED FROM COOLNESS TO THE ANGLO-AMERICAN  
PROPOSAL BASED ON PRESUMED SUPPORT FOR THE MODERATES IN THE  
INTERNAL AGREEMENT). AS LONG AS THE UK CONTINUES TO EXPRESS  
ITS WILLINGNESS TO PROVIDE A RESIDENT COMMISSIONER, AN EXPRESS-  
ION OF FLEXIBILITY IN TRANSFORMING THE POSITION INTO A "NEUTRAL  
CHAIRMAN" CAN STRENGTHEN OUR BARGAINING POSITION ON OTHER  
MATTER AT ISSUE IN THE PROPOSAL.

-- OWEN MAY BE RIGHT THAT THE SUBSTITUTION OF ANOTHER NATIONAL  
FOR BRITISH COMMISSIONER WOULD BE THE FACE-SAVING DEVICE SMITH  
COULD POINT TO IN MOVING BACK TOWARDS THE AAP.

2. THE CONCEPT OF A NEUTRAL CHAIRMAN, OF COURSE, WOULD CHANGE  
THE NATURE OF THE PROPOSAL BRINGING IT CLOSER TO THE NAMIBIA  
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PAGE 02 LUSAKA 01672 101135Z

CONCEPT. BUT IT HAS ALREADY BEEN MODIFIED IMPORTANTLY BY  
INTRODUCTION OF POWER SHARING THROUGH A GOVERNING COUNCIL.  
FLEXIBILITY PARTICULARLY TOWARDS IDEAS THAT BOTH RHODESIAN  
PARTIES SUPPORT IS IMPORTANT.

3. AS AN ALTERNATIVE SUGGESTION THEREFORE RATHER THAN AS A  
SUBSTITUTION, THE CONCEPT SEEMS TO ME TO HAVE VALUE.

4. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, OWEN ALREADY USED THE TERM  
"OR NEUTRAL CHAIRMAN" IN REFERRING TO THE RESIDENT COMMISSIONER  
DURING THE MEETING WITH THE PF AND FRONTLINE IN DAR.

LOW

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS  
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**Draft Date:** 10 may 1978  
**Decapton Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Decapton Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
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**Review Markings:**  
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